

## [Old Records]

Interview (?)

By J. A. [Haggart, St. Paul, Nebr.?)

Written March 1, [1930?] [?]

[????????]

I recently prepared an Abstract of Title in which the first entry was a [Patent?] from the United States to M. J. Paul, [?] of the interest of the Minor heirs of [Dillon F. Haworth?]. deceased.

It was the only incident of the kind I had ever run across and my curiosity was aroused. How could [??] title to Government land by purchase of the rights of Minor Heirs.

I went to the Court House to see if there was any evidence to be found there of authority for [issuance?] of such Patent. There was. In a pigeon hole, covered with the accumulated dust of over half a century, I found the files of an old case entitled "In the Matter of the Estate of [Dillon F. Haworth?], Deceased, "filed March 16, 1875, [A. G. Randall?], Clerk of District Court, the first document of these files was the petition of [Jonathan S. Crow?], Guardian of Eva Pearle [Haworth?], [Deceased?], in the handwriting of Nicholas J. Paul; directed to the Honorable Samuel [Maxwell?], Judge of the Third Judicial District of Nebraska, and recited that [Dillon F. Haworth?] on April 14, [1875?] made Homestead Entry No. [3701?], on the [??] of [??], [?] [13?], [Range 9?], erected a house and resided thereon with his family until the [18?]th day of April [1875?], when he, his wife and one child died—perished in a [??]-leaving one child Eva Pearle [Haworth?], age three years. That petitioner is the Guardian of said Minor, and [prays?] for a license to sell said homestead

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for himself of said Minor, under the second section of the United States Homestead Laws, approved May 20, [1868?] [Case??]

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The petition is signed, "J. S. Crow," and is verified June [5?], [1874?], before E. J. Paul, Probate Judge of [Howard?] County, Nebraska. ([Nate?]) Nicholas J. Paul was the first Probate (County) Judge of [Howard?] County, was the proprietor of the [Townsite?] of St. Paul, was probably the first white man to establish a permanent residence in [Howard?] County, [?] the prime [?] in the organization of the County, lived the remainder of his life and died on his original Homestead at the age of eighty years, and as George Washington was the Father of his Country, so was N. J. Paul, the Father of [Howard?] County. He died with the love and esteem of all who knew him. The next document appearing is an "[Order to Show Cause?]" and is remarkable in this: That it is in the Handwriting of, and is signed by Samuel [Maxwell?], our first District Judge, who held the first term of [?] Court ever held in this County, and afterwards Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of this State, and became the most celebrated Jurist and law writer this State has ever produced. The [?] of Hearing [?] the filing of said petition and the object [??] thereof, and notified all persons interested in said estate to appear before said court at 10 o'clock A. M. on the 17th day of March [1875?], to show cause why such license should not be granted and is dated February 10, [1875?].

The next document is [a?] Proof of Publication, which is a copy of said "Order to Show Cause," and is verified March 17, [1875?] by J. N. Paul, publisher of the "[Howard?] County [Advocate?]," a weekly newspaper published in [Howard?] County, and recites that said notice was published in said newspaper three consecutive [weeks?]. First published March [5?], [1875?].

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(Note) J. N. Paul was the brother of E. J. Paul, they came to the County together. E. J. entering a homestead adjoining the Townsite of St. Paul on the North, and J. N. one

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adjoining the Townsite on the South, and they, “[Kick?]” and “[Jim?]” and their devices on these homesteads to this day. “[Jim?] was a member of the first Board of County Commissioners, took a prominent part in the organization and development of the County, became a prominent Attorney, and was afterwards Judge of the District Court, and died in St. Paul, at the ripe old age of eighty three years, with the confidence and respect of everyone.

The next document is the license to sell issues to Jonathan S. Crow, Guardian, is dated March 17th, 1875, and is signed 'samuel Maxwell, Judge.”

I had been told the full story of the [deaths?] of [Dillon F. Haworth?], his wife and child in the great “Master Storm” of [1873?], [namy?] many times in the olden days, but the memory of it had not become like a half forgotten dream. But the reading of these old documents and the memories they revive together with some details which I have gathered from persons still living. That story would read like this:

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In the summer of [1871?] [Howard?] County and all the [Loup?] Valley County and [?] of Nance County was in all respects an unhibited wilderness, except for an occasional [Pumeo?] Indian on a hunting or trapping expedition on the [Loup?] River, or a Sioux Indian on a foray to steal two ponies of the [Pawnees?], no human foot tread its soil, but in the late summer and fall of that year, a few adventurous white men came, and it were, to spy out the land. Among these were J. N. Paul, A. [G?]. Kendall, afterwards County Clerk from [1873?] to [1881?] and then Commissioner of Public Lands and Building of the State of Nebraska, and some others, who spied out the lands near St. Paul, and [???] 4 and some other Danish people who settled lands near [Dansebrog?]. Some of these selected homesteads. Nearly all returned to their homes to come back in the spring.

In the spring of 1872, settlers came by scores and hundreds, so that, strange as it may appear, by the spring of 1873 all the choicest Government land along the [Loup?] Valleys,

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for fifty miles by the river from here was taken by Homesteaders, so that one coming after that must be content to go back to the hills or to the inland creek valleys.

I came in July 1873, but by that time all the choice government land was gone except such as was termed "Sand Hills" or thought to be too rough for farm lands. Most of the settlers came in covered wagons, "Prairie Schooners" as they were called, some leading or driving a cow or two, some with pigs, or a crate of chickens, some with a plow or other farm apparatus strapped under or on top the wagon among household goods, to start the future farm.

Among them, coming with ox teams and a covered wagon, was Mathew Crow and his family, three stalwart boys, Jonathan, Rodney, and [Vance?], all grown men, and several daughters. They came late in 1872 and selected land in Spring Creek Valley, half way between where the towns of [Wolbush?] and Cushing now stand. Old Mathew was the first to build his "dug-out" just back from the creek in the face of the first [?]. Dug back into the bank to form the back and part of the two ends of the house, while the front and remainder of the ends were built of the tough sods of the creek bottom land. In the center of the room was an oak tree crotch, on which rested stout center poles that extended to the gable ends, with a roof of oak rafters, covered first with willow brush, then with sod—two layers deep—with joints nicely broken, and a sprinkling of yellow clay to fill the cracks cracks .

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While now it was an effectual barrier of rain, cold or heat.

There were four one-sash windows, two in the front, and one in each end, with a partition separating one end for sleeping rooms, and in one corner of the living room was a feature that I had never seen in a new settler's cabin—a fire place. This was dug back into the bank and a flue bored to the top of the bench and there a sod chimney extended. I visited this home on a winter night in the late 70's and with a cherry fire of oak logs in that fireplace, a more cozy winter home I could not imagine.

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One of the daughters of Mathew Crow married Dillon F. [Haworth?], they had two small children, Gracie and Eva Pearle, five and three years old, and they wanted a farm upon which to make their future home and raise their family. They went farther up the creek and "squatted" upon the same land described in those Court proceedings and here they too started to build their future home.

The winter of 1872-3 was fairly mild and they made considerable progress with their new home. During March and the first half of April they had progressed so far that their home was nearly complete, in [fact?], all but a part of the roof that was not yet all covered with sod and clay as the customs required, but it was so nearly complete that they moved into it expecting to finish the roof in a day or two.

Easter Sunday, April 13, 1873, started as a balmy spring day, warm as June, with all the promise of coming summer and Dillon [Haworth?], his wife and little ones were happy with anticipation of what they would do with their fine farm of rich creek bottom land when they should get their start in life.

Then a cloud appeared, a summer shower was brewing, that would cause the grass to grow and the flowers to bloom; and the rain did come, 6 just a summer shower at first, then it grew darker, the wind that had been so balmy and refreshing turned into the Northwest, the rain turned to snow, the wind increased to a hurricane and the great Easter Storm of 1873, that has gone down in history as the worse that ever visited the Western country was on.

I was not here then, and I hesitate to tell of the terrors of that awful storm, but when I came in July of that Year, the stories of its horrors was on every tongue. One told of how it blew through a hole in his barn no larger than his hand, so much snow that the barn was completely filled so that his cattle were actually smothered to death. Another told that it blew through a hole in his bedroom window no bigger than a straw, enough snow to cover his bed a foot deep, but this is only an example of the stories that were told. One

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old philosopher told me this theory about it. "That snow didn't fall down more than it did up. I simply came straight, driven by that mighty wind, if one flake struck the ground it was immediately gathered by the wind and hurled on among the soothing mass that in this way was multiplied a thousand fold, until the atmosphere was so completely filled that one exposed to it could hardly breathe. If one ventured out in it he was quickly rendered helpless for want of breath. "Why," he said, "even the snow itself seemed to be searching for some place where it could escape the fury of that awful wind, and settle down to rest. It was that which caused it to completely fill every sheltered place it could enter." I have heard more than one tell of tying a clothesline from the door to the well, or barn, or wood shed, that he could clasp it with one hand while protecting his nose and eyes with the other, and to go and return without straying away and being lost in the storm; that it was so bad that no human being could survive exposed to it was practically certain.

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And that terrible storm continued all that afternoon, all that night, all the next day and night and until Tuesday afternoon, one continuous hurricane of blinding, stifling, smothering snow.

There was no one left to tell the story of Dillon F. [Haworth?] and his family in that awful storm, except little Eve Pearle, three years old, and this is all she told, "Gracie is dead, now we gotta go."

When the storm ceased every one was deeply concerned about the fate of his neighbor. The Crows, knowing the condition of the [Haworth?] home was especially anxious, and as soon as possible the young men hurried there to find the house filled with snow that had blown in through that unfinished roof, and after shoveling and digging their worst fears were realized. There was no one there, nor could track or trace of anyone be found.

An alarm was sent out, a crew of young men came to join in the search. All day Wednesday no trace of them was found. Then on Thursday, (I have this story from the lips

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of Jasper Sparks one of the searchers who discovered the bodies, and who is still living) after the sun had partly melted the snow away, down the creek almost half a mile from the house, just over the brink of the hill, where the drift was the deepest, a dark object was found protruding from the snow, after a hurried effort the dead body of Dillon [Haworth?] was pulled from the snow, and in his arms was clasped the lifeless form of little Gracie.

A farther search soon disclosed the fringe of a shawl appearing in the melting snow and in a few moments the searching party had exhumed the lifeless body of Mrs. [Haworth?] in whose arms was clasped a 8 bundle, wrapped in a shawl. Carefully they unwrapped the bundle, and a cold little white face appeared, more as if asleep, than dead. One of the uncles snatched the little one to his breast, for he loved her dearly. "Eva, Eva Pearle," he cried, and then, "By heaven she is not dead, she breathes." Carefully he rewrapped the shawl about her and snuggled her to his breast to warm her back to life, and [?] after a time he called her name, "Eva, Eva," and she gasped, half opened her tired frightened eyes, and this is what she said, "Gracie is dead, now we gotta go." And the weary frightened little eyes closed again in sleep. Little Eva Pearle [Haworth?] was saved.

It was thought by those who found her, that little Gracie had died before they left the house, and that what Eva said was only the repetition of what she had heard her parents say. They were but a few words, and by themselves were but the half conscious murmurings of a sick child, but between the lines was told a tragic tale.

At least two other persons lost their lives in the county in that storm, but the property loss was a serious blow to those new settlers. Many thought that one half of the livestock owned in the county was lost. As an example: I know of one man, Thomas [Ostoa?], who came in 1872, bringing 102 horses, with an ambition to start a Horse Rash Ranch for rasiing raising horses to supply the settlers with work teams; of these 102 horses only 26 survived the storm.

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Another incident. Captain Samuel [Munson?] had been sent here with a Company of soldiers, part of [?] calvary, to guard the settlers against forays of the Sioux Indians and in the winter of 1872-3 was camped on [Munson?] creek, about two miles above the present Village of [Klba?].

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On that bright Easter morning a squad of cavalry was sent on a scouting expedition to the west in search of Indian signs. When that storm struck them they had reached the Middle Loup Valley near where Loup City now stands, and in an endeavor to find shelter, came across the sod cabin of a Mr. Vanscooter, where they were made as welcome as the circumstances would allow, and there they unsaddled their horses, evidently turning them loose to shift for themselves. The horses drifted before the terrific wind until they came to creek in [?] draw of canyon, and in the bed of this creek they gathered together to take advantage of the shelter from the wind that it afforded. When the storm subsided that ravine was filled level full with drifted snow and every horse perished. That creek is called "Dead Horse" creek to this day.

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TO THE OLD PIONEER He went forth to better his chances in life, To improve on the stance that his forefathers took; That his children be farther removed from the strife, And see in the future, a better-out look. He cared not for self, nor this work that it meant, He was hardened and used to the test; If they wanted a man, who with work was content, He could hoe his own row with the best. So he fared forth with vim, to a land of his dreams, To a land of enchantment and fame; Where the grasses grew tall in the balmy sunbeams, And the county abounded in game. Where deer and elk roamed o'er the hills and the plains, And the fish of his choice swam the stream; Where Uncle Sam promised a home for his gain, And his own will might there be supreme. It was he who went out and broke the first trail, Built the first bridge o'er the river and brook; Built the first school house on top of the hill, The first preacher to read the good book; Came at his bidding to help him devise, Out of the wilderness a paradise. Twas a herculean task and it cost him dear, For



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Nature which for centuries had held its [way?]; Scorned the work of the old pioneer, And fought him at every turn of the way. He had no gold for the sacrifice, 'Twas with treasures like those that he paid the price; There's a debt that we may not pay, I fear 'tis the debt that we owe The Old Pioneer.